

RECKLESS RALPH'S

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP



A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

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LEOMINSTER, MASS. MAN WROTE MANY FAMOUS DIME NOVELS

by Nicholas Zook

Courtesy Worcester Evening Gazette
Aug. 19, 1947

The old frontier stories published by Beadle's Dime Library and Half Dime Library at the turn of the century have become collector's items. Copies of these weekly publications with their lurid covers are now zealously sought not only for their antique value but for the portrayal of the American scene in the frontier days.

An important author of these novels was a Leominster man, Samuel Stone (Buckskin Sam) Hall, who wrote more than 50 tales for Beadle. Published from 1877 to 1899, his work is in high demand for its Americana value.

The base price for his work is now \$2.50 a copy for his half dime tales and \$5 for his dime library items. Some of his rarer items go as high as \$50 a copy.

These novels are considered best for their portrayal of Texas and are eagerly collected by those interested in that state. The University of Texas has been searching for years for Sam Hall items and now has practically a complete collection.

Typical of Hall's titles are "Kit Carson, Jr., The Crack Shot of the West," "The Lone Star Gambler, or The Maid of the Magnolias," and "Stampede Steve, or The Doom of the Double Face."

Buckskin Sam was not an ivory tower author. He lived the life he portrayed. The slender man with a gentle voice and manner was a dead

shot, a skillful rider and a hard drinker. He needed these virtues or vices to survive in a West that deserved its reputation for wildness.

Born in Leominster in 1836, his boyhood home stood where the High School is now located. The Hall family were leaders in the fruit growing industry and owned several hundred acres of land in the vicinity of West street.

Sam was an incorrigible youngster. Finishing school at the age of 15, he tired of a routine life and ran away. He signed on a sailing ship that rounded Cape Horn and docked in California. After a string of odd jobs in San Francisco, he threw his lot in with several young men from the cattle country and drifted to Texas.

On his first night in Texas he was involved in a brawl that impressed a number of spectator Rangers. They signed him up and for a number of years he was a Texas Ranger. His experiences are described throughout many of his books.

The Civil War broke out and he enlisted in a Louisiana regiment. The loyal Northerner in rebel uniform acted as a spy for Union troops.

After the War he joined Buffalo Bill Cody and his men. Later as an Indian scout he became a close friend of Kit Carson. In fact, Sam and the famed Kit Carson came to Leominster for a visit, making the trip from the Dakotas on horseback. Sedate Leominster and the boisterous pair did not agree and the pair soon left.

Sam drifted aimlessly to New York City and back to California where he began writing his novels. He eventually settled in Wilmington, Del., where

he remained until his death in 1886. He is buried in Leominster's Evergreen Cemetery.

The Beadle novels may be a contribution to the folk lore of the old West but the colorful career of Buckskin Sam is more than that. It's the symbol of a rugged clan of men who converted an untamed territory into peaceful settlements.

HUNTING FOR NOVELS IS FUN

by George Flaum

Some say that novels are becoming scarcer with the passing of the years and claim that all their efforts to find them have been without success. This may be so. But it is the writer's opinion that there still are hundreds of thousands of the old-time novels scattered about the length and breadth of the country awaiting discovery by the persistent searcher who intelligently approaches the problem, and who is willing to work.

Just what does one need to discover novels, you ask. Nothing unusual. Just the determination to run down every lead regardless of how old or hopeless it may seem. The enthusiasm to withstand repeated failure and disappointment; a working capitol and some luck.

During the past two and a half years the writer has located approximately 5,000 novels. About two thousand of these were obtained from fellow-collectors but the large majority were found outside of their ranks. Some of the novels were rare mint copies. Others reprints and not so valuable. Many were in just fair condition and approximately five hundred were in such poor shape they were not worth keeping and had to be destroyed.

Novel hunting is a lot of fun and the persistent hunter should meet with some degree of success if he will plot his hunting campaign along the lines set out in this article.

First and most important, talk novels! Especially when you are with strangers and groups of older people. If practicable, carry a few with you to show people just what you have in mind. To most of your listeners it will be the first time they have ever seen one but quite frequently you will be encouraged by hearing some-

one say, 'why I remember those; I read them when I was a boy.' People will admire you for having a hobby and someone may give you a lead. Then, it will be up to you to run it down and, even though it may prove to be a dud, you'll enjoy the chase and eventually, if you persist in this line of attack, you will be given a clue that may lead to a forgotten cache in some dusty attic or clothes press.

When the writer first began his search he advertised in a dozen metropolitan papers scattered from Boston to St. Louis with negligible result. It has been his experience that the best response has been obtained from small, popular rural papers. Popularity is very important for no one wants to advertise in a paper that isn't read.

Various types of ad-copy was experimented with and something along the following lines brought the best result. "A search through your attic or some forgotten corner of your home may mean extra money for you. I pay cash for old-time five cent magazines that the boys read years ago such as Nick Carter, Buffalo Bill and Frank Merriwell weeklies." Sounds corny doesn't it...but it has found novels. An hour spent at your local library will give you a list of weekly papers over your immediate area. If your searching time is limited to a few hours a week, confine your activities to within easy driving distance of your home. And, by all means, don't write but go and see the people who may answer your ad. Try different papers and keep trying. After eleven different advertisements, the writer landed nearly four hundred novels at an advertising cost of less than ten dollars.

Other sources of novels are rummage sales and welfare stores where secondhand house furnishings are sold. Small used paper dealers are worth contacting also. They will be much more apt to take an interest in what you tell them than the larger dealers and, for a consideration of ten cents a novel as they come, will lay aside all they find. You can call on them once a month and pick up your treasures...but don't be disappointed if they tell you that they forgot to look, or haven't come across any. Keep after them; someday they may surprise you.

Used magazine stores that buy and sell back issues of current magazines and comic books are also worth your consideration. They may occasionally buy in a few novels with a lot of current periodicals. This source isn't the best but it's worth a try.

Country auctions. Have you ever attended one? They're lots of fun and you'll see many things that you may be tempted to buy aside from novels. At some auctions the family treasures of several lifetimes are displayed to the public gaze for the first time. And some of those treasures may be novels. It is best to get to these public affairs early so you will have the opportunity to look over the things that will be put up for sale. Novels and books are usually packed helter-skelter in boxes, or tied into bundles and sold in lots. Don't be afraid to rummage around. The writer knows of one collector who attended a public auction and located an almost complete set of Tip-Top which he bought for a song.

And last but most difficult for many. Letter writing is well worth investigating. Letters to whom you may ask. And the answer is to anyone you think has some novels. The writer has written approximately five hundred letters to boys of years ago whose name and address appeared in the readers letter writing columns of the various weeklies. Probably not more than a dozen ever replied and the majority of the letters were either returned or never answered. But in two instances, the writer was able to locate and buy fifteen hundred old-timers. It's worth a try, if you don't mind writing letters.

But despite all the novels the writer has found he has been continually amazed that so many of his particular wants have been absent from his various novel hauls. So, perhaps the suggestions outlined here will not bring you all of your particular wants either, but you should find some novels if luck is with you and you diligently make the search. In the end you'll probably agree that hunting for novels is fun....and also work!

TRICK AND FANCY ROPER NOW BUILDING CUSTODIAN

Still adept—Henry Stinemetts, old time cowboy, shows that he is still

handy with the Lariat. When he was with the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show the card used to read: Henry Stinemetts, Trick and Fancy Roper, Rifle and Revolver Shot; Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show." That was back in 1901 when Henry was 23 years old.

Nowadays at the age of 79, Henry Stinemetts' card reads: "Building Custodian, 223 W. 2nd St."

Henry's revolvers and rifles and ropes are stowed away and seldom used except when the former circus star brings them out to demonstrate to friends that much of his youthful prowess with the lariat and the Frontier Model Colt .45 remains unimpaired.

In the years between the circus and the custodianship, Henry kept riding and roping. In 1909, for instance, he carried the U. S. mail on horseback between the towns of Scheares Bridge, Flanagan and Bake Oven in the state of Oregon.

"I wasn't the original Pony Express, of course," "It was called the 'Pony Mail,' but in the way it was done it was exactly like the Pony Express. We rode broncs, mostly on a dead run, every 15 miles or so we changed horses. We had schedules to keep and we kept them almost to the minute. The way lay over mountain trails and through forests. The Pony Mail was the last official government mail route where horses were used. I guess that makes it historic."

Between engagements of trick riding, roping and shooting for the entertainment of circus audiences, Henry cultivated the friendship of Buffalo Bill, Pawnee Bill and other notables of the early-day Wild West shows. Letters which he proudly shows in the handwriting of these men and of John Ringling attest to the fact that he was known in the circus world as a "steady, dependable and efficient performer." As a showman, Henry became master of the two-gun lightning draw. That art, he declared, is based upon a perfectly correlated interplay between the thumb and forefinger, which operate the hammer and trigger of the gun and the remaining three fingers, which lift the weapon from its holster. He was also a fine roper, throwing the rope from either hand.

Courtesy Los Angeles Times

May 12, 1947

Dear Mr. Flaum:

As you have already learned from postal acknowledgement mailed you March 4th, your letter of February 20th was received. This is only one of several of like tenor addressed to me by collectors of Dime Novels, ever since publication of my first installment on the serial on GOLDEN HOURS which appeared in the Dime Novel Round-Up, who labor under the impression that I also buy and sell these booklets. This is not the case, though in my boyhood days I did take a keen interest in Nick Carter, Old King Brady, Old Cap Collier, Frank Reade and Jack Wright and other luminaries of that period, which has continued to this day.

You have kindly offered to try and locate any particular literature of which I am in quest. Well, in a contribution by Mr. Willis E. Hurd in the July 1943 issue of the Round-Up, entitled: "An Open Letter on the Writers of Golden Hours," he makes mention that in 1902 Golden Hours began publishing biographies of its various writers in G. H. Junior, illustrated with line sketches. These volumes, if in any way possible, I would like to procure, so as to be able at long last to gaze upon the lineaments of my favorite authors. The pictures of some of these—Cobb, Shea, Royal and Hancock—were portrayed on the cover of G. H., issue of July 21, 1900, frontispiece of the serial: "Golden Hours Camping Out Club in the Adirondacks, or: Writers on a Racket," being a recounting of a Summer outing in that section taken by the authors—but these were taken in a group, some of them side views, and rather obscure. I am particularly eager to obtain a portrait of Albert Stearns, ("Fred" of the Bones Series) who also wrote under the nom de plume of Fred Thorpe. If you know of any one who has these numbers for sale, would appreciate your putting me in touch with them.

As you will note, I am Secretary of the New York Flute Club, the duties attendant upon which consume practically all of my spare time. The season of 1946-1947 will be concluded next month, after which I shall contribute an article relating a memorable visit to the late Gil Patten, which has been promised Mr. Cummings for some time past. Thanking you for your

interest, Sincerely,

Harry A. Weill

NEWSY NEWS

by Ralph F. Cummings

Tony M. Peterson says he isn't much of a novel collector, but gets a big kick out of finding what the other fellow missed. He has a copy of a very rare novel, where there were only three of them ever published, called Scotts Novels. #2. Title Wild Dick. These are very rare, who else has any of them? They were printed in Ohio in 1891.

News of the death of F. N. Wearing of 17 Worcester Rd., Bootle, Liverpool 20, England, sent in by several members and his sister saying that her brother died of a stroke, Wed. July 9th, 1947. He was the author of the article in the May Roundup #176. Specimen numbers of Bygone Boys Papers. He also wrote in #165. June 1946—The Grand Old Stories. Bro. Wearing said he was born in the U. S. A. somewhere around Brooklyn.

Mrs. C. A. Hyatt also writes, that her husband, died Aug. 16th. She said he had been in poor health for the past 5 years (asthma and anemia), says he had a pain in the chest, and the doctor said it was plurisy, but it proved to be an abscess on the lung. (So you see, even doctors can make a mistake, too). His folks were at the hospital nearly 2 weeks before he died. The pain he had was terrible. God bless both brothers always. "Crossing the Bar."

Sunset and Evening Star,

And one clear call for me!

And may there be

No moaning of the Bar

When I put out to sea,

For tho from out are bourne

Of time and place

The flood may bear me far

I hope to see my Pilot....

Face to Face,

When I have crossed the Bar.

—Tennyson

West meets East!!!

Frisco Bert Couch and his Squaw flew in on me the morning of Aug. 7th from San Francisco, and in the afternoon Henry Stinemetts of Los Angeles, Calif., came in by train, and neither party knew the other was coming, nor had they ever met before.

Quite a coincidence, I call it. We all went up to Clyde Wakefields and Frank Henry. A fine time all around. Mr. & Mrs. Couch asked me if I knew them when they got here, and I said I thought they were the McCaffertys of Texas, but I was wrong. Frisco Bert looked just like Bill McCafferty. Frisco Bert and his wife put up at a hotel in Worcester and left next day for Lawrence and Lowell, Mass. Henry Stinemetts came home with me, and stayed over night, leaving next day for New York and Calif. Bros. Henry and Frisco and wife only scraped the surface, when they got a peek at my collection. Better luck next time, when you all can stay longer.

Mr. & Mrs. Charles Duprez were up Aug. 17th and took some pictures of the old timers here.

John W. Schaefer sends in the following that appeared in "The True Mag. for Sept. 1947. Strange But True by Mel Morningside." "Between 1860 and 1900, Americans bought approximately a billion copies of some 125,000 different 'dime novels,' 90 percent of which incidentally were priced at five cents. Yet today, copies are so scarce that they are collectors items. Even twenty-seven years ago one of these nickel books sold for \$83.00, or 1660 times its original value."

Fred Lee writes, "Each year, in one issue of the Roundup, let us have a necrology list of all ex-members who have passed away since the very first year of the H. H. Bro." Good idea, Fred, I'll see what I can do on this.

E. Marvin Smith, 1954 Dublin St., Mobile, Ala. Likes Chinatown, Wall St., and Jack Wrights in Happy Days.

J. Edward Leithead will have a fine article in next issue.

The Last Sensation, Vol. 1 No. 1, Dec. 28th, 1867, sold for 10c, was published by Joseph Carter, 17 Howard St., New York. Size 12x16½ inches. 16 pages, well illustrated, etc., just like the old Police Gazettes and News were, but not colored. 4 columns to the page.

Street & Smiths Literary Album, Vol. 1, No. 1, Dec. 23rd 1865, sold for 10c, was published by Street & Smith, 11 Frankfort St., New York. Size 11¾ x 17¼ inches, 16 pages, illustrated. Title—Steelhand, the Buccaneer, or the Maidens Flag of Hope. No author. Story is complete. Lots of short articles, etc. 4 columns to the page.

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WANTED

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234. Mrs. F. Hausman, 6747 Cooper Ave., Glendale, L. I., N. Y. (New member)

"PHILATELISTS"

Have many fine postage stamps which I can send on approval.

Richard E. Stolt

2048 W. Hutchinson St., Chicago 18 Ill.

Dave Adams wants to buy

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A Scrapbook of newspaper clippings or pictorial material covering the actual exploits of the James Boys.

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Wanted—Pluck and Luck and Secret Service below No. 200. Roy E. Morris, 221 6th St., S. W., Mason City, Iowa.

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Ralph F. Cummings

Fisherville, Mass.

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 Fame & Fortune 117 237 241 \$1.00 each
 Do and Dare #44-45 \$1.50 each
 Wide Awake Weekly #42 142 145 \$1.00 each
 Might & Main #59 61 64 69 72 73 75 78 80 \$1.00 each
 Brave & Bold #147 153 154 239 259 260 305 376 380 382 425 427 \$1 each. #169 150
 New Buffalo Bill Weekly, large size #8 10 20 21, 75c each
 Bowery Boy Library #24 33 38 96 98 \$1.00 each
 Tip Top Weekly #632 637 639 640 642 643 644 645 646 651 653 654 655 657 659
 660 664 price 75c each
 The Boys Best Weekly #37 38 40 41 42 42 48 49 50 52 53 57, 75c each
 Old Cap Collier Library #521 786 at \$1.00 each
 Young Rover Library #18 19, 75c each
 Red Raven #29, Beadles Pocket Library #58, price \$1.50 each
 All Around #12, Young Athletes #5, at \$1.00 each.
 Old Sleuth Library #19, 75c Nugget Library #163 \$1.25.
 Old Sleuth Weekly #140 142 155, price \$1.00 each

WANTED!

FOLLOWING STORY PAPERS

The Golden Weekly, Happy Days, The Young Men of America. Will give an extra high trade for the ones I need in these, for Beadles dime and half-dime libraries, Pluck & Luck, Work & Win, Wide Awake Weekly, New Buffalo Bill Weekly, Fame & Fortune, all of these are in good condition. Do drop me a line, pards, I'm sure you won't be disappointed in me. I also have Beadles Dime and Half-dime Library's; Wide Awake Library; the 5 cent Comic Library; Young Sleuth Library; Old Cap Collier, 5 cent edition, and 10 cent edition, cloth bound books; W. B. Keen, Cooke & Co. Claude Melnotte as a detective, and, The Expressman and the Detective, by Allan Pinkerton, 1874 and 1875; Thirty years as a Detective; Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly, vol. I—Jan. to June, 1880; Golden Hours, two bound vols Nos. 734 to 769, 770 to 805, in perfect condition. What am I offered in cash for these two vols. Also, bound vol. Beadles half-dime library, no's. 388 390 393 398 401 403 408 412 425 426 431 432 434 442 445 447 449 452 456 469 472 475 577 578 480 493 498 499 506 510 513 517 518; no's 767 768 771 772 773 774 777 791 795 801 804 813 818 823 825 827 830 836 838 851 861 873 875 879 880 887 888 894 901 905 909 919 922 923 927 937 939, the two vol's in good condition. What am I offered?

J. W. MARTIN

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- The Schoolboys Own Library, 4d. Nos. 153. Black Peters Treasure. 50c.
- Apes and Monkeys. Their Life and Language, by R. L. Garner, 1900, Autographed by the author. Fine condition. 284 pages, gold letters on front of cloth bound book, green color. Very rare, \$4.00
- The New York Detective Library (some a little rat chewed, or browned up a little, but worth what I'm asking for them, none stamped or taped, some uncut) Nos. 30 74 90 102 122 131 132 135 144 146 152 183 184 185 190 197 198 207 229 230 232 233 234 236 240 244 248 259 260 263 274. Price \$1.75 each, or the lot for \$50.00
- The Argosy, Vol. 7. Nos. 313 to 338, fine condition \$4.00. Nos. 313 to 337 fair, \$2. Both bd.
- Books—by Capt. Mayne Reid. The Wild Hunters, Rangers and Regulators, The Love Ranch, Cris Rock. The Boy Slaves, Lost Leonore. Price 60c each.
- The Child Wife. 1st ed. 1869. \$1.50 by Capt. Mayne Reid.
- In the Saddle, Sportsmans Club A Float, The Camp in the Foothills, Frank in the Mountains, The Steel Horse. Price 50c each. All by Harry Castleman.
- Ragged Dick, Fame & Fortune, Price \$1.00 each. All by H. Alger.
- Edward Stratemeyer's, The Campaign of the Jungle, Under the Mikado's Flag, A Young Volunteer in Cuba, Fighting in Cuban Waters, Under Otis in the Philippines, The Gunclub Boys of Lakeport, With Taylor on the Rio Grande, Richard Dares Venture, Last Cruise of the Spitfire, The Young Auctioneer, The Baseball Boys of Lakeport, Reuben Stones Discovery, Shorthand Tom the Reporter, The Fort in the Wilderness, Bound to be an Electrician, Treasure Seekers of the Andes, The Minute Boys of Bunker Hill. Price 60c each.
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- Beauty in Women, by Alexander Walker. Well Illust. 1852. Shows women in various poses of art. Once sold for \$17.50. 372 pages. 23 plates. Binding cracked, otherwise good, very scarce, my price \$4.00.
- The Washingtonians, by Pauline Bradford Mackie. 1901. 357 pages, price \$1.00. All books etc. in good to fine condition.

Ralph F. Cummings

Fisherville, Mass.